

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends claims 2-20. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 2-20.

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action the Examiner reminded Applicants that a claim for priority must be filed with respect to the Priority Document filed in the parent Patent No. 6,430,292. The Examiner is hereby informed that a claim for priority with respect Japanese Patent Application No. 9-181186, filed July 7, 1997 in Japan was submitted by way of the copy of the Declaration filed along with the present application. The Examiner's attention is directed to the first page of the copy of the Declaration in which Applicants specifically set forth a claim of priority under 35 USC §119 of Japanese Patent Application No. 9-181186. The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge that such claim of priority was in fact made in the present application.

However, in order to expedite matters, filed on even date herewith is a claim for priority which sets forth in a separate paper Applicants claim of priority already submitted by the copy of the Declaration filed along with the present application.

Claims 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject-matter which Applicants regards as the invention. Various amendments were made throughout claims 11 and 12 to bring them into conformity with the requirements of 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Therefore, this objection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Specifically, amendments were made to claims 11 and 12 to overcome the objections noted by the Examiner in paragraph 4 of the Office Action.

The Examiner's cooperation is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' Attorney by telephone should any further indefinite matters be discovered so that appropriate amendments may be made.

Claims 2-20 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(a) as being anticipated by Schoultz (U.S. Patent No. 6,157,723). This rejection is traversed for the following reasons. Applicants submit that the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in claims 2-20 are not taught or suggested by Schoulz whether taken individually or in combination with any of the other of references of record. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Amendments were made to the claims so as to more clearly describe features of the present invention. Particularly, amendments were made to the claims so as to more clearly describe that the present invention provides a recording medium and service system wherein the recording medium stores a program that when executed causes an information processing apparatus to manage availability of a decryption key used for decrypting information encrypted with an encryption key corresponding to the decryption key. The service system can, for example, correspond to the information processing apparatus and performs operations corresponding to the steps of the program when executed.

According to the present invention, the program, for example, includes codes that manage a disclosure time of the decryption key in a key storage wherein the key

storage stores at least one decryption key for decrypting encrypted information and codes that makes the decryption key available to another apparatus on or after the disclosure time to permit the other apparatus to decrypt the information encrypted with the encryption key.

Thus, according to the present invention, the encryption key is immediately available for encrypting information while a decryption key for decrypting the encrypted information is only available after a predetermined period of time thereby allowing decryptions of the encrypted information to remain secret for a preset period of time and decryption to occur only after expiration of the predetermined period of time. These features of the present invention provide unique advantages over conventional apparatus in that it aids in preventing the premature disclosure of secret/confidential information prior to a preset period of time.

The above described features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by any of the references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other. Particularly, these features are not taught or suggested by Schoultz.

Schoultz teaches a method and apparatus which supports secure communications using automated encryption key scheduling. As taught by Schoultz, a communication device which is allowed to communicate with other communication devices in the system is allowed to obtain access to a schedule having entries of specific time periods that govern the selection of various encryption keys. As taught by Schoultz, a communication device selects an appropriate encryption key based on the current time and the schedule and uses the selected encryption key to

conduct secure communications with other communication devices. Schoultz also teaches that the communication device receiving such encrypted communications selects a decryption key to decrypt the encrypted communications based on the current time and the schedule. In this regard, Schoultz discloses that the selected encryption key corresponds to the selected decryption key using a technique such as data encryption standard (DES) and the selected decryption key is immediately available to permit immediate decryption at the receiver. The Examiner's attention is directed to col. 2, line 57 through col. 3, line 25 and col. 4, lines 25-30 of Schoultz.

Thus, as is clear from the above, there is no teaching or suggestion in Schoultz wherein the encryption of data using an encryption key can be performed immediately while decryption of the encrypted data using a decryption key which corresponds to the encryption key can only be performed after a predetermined period of time since the decryption key is not made available until expiration of such predetermined period of time as in the present invention.

Therefore, Schoultz fails to teach or suggest codes that manage disclosure time of the decryption key in a key storage, said key storage storing at least one decryption key for decrypting encrypted information as recited in the claims.

Further, Schoultz fails to teach or suggest codes that make the decryption key available to another apparatus on or after the disclosure time to decrypt the encrypted information which has been encrypted with the encryption key before the disclosure time as recited in the claims.

In addition to the above noted deficiencies of Schoultz, Applicants submit that Schoultz fails to teach or suggest other features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims.

For example, Schoultz does not teach or suggest the features of the present invention regarding designating a time period during which secret/confidential information shall be maintained in secret/confidential state as in the present invention. According to the present invention, this designation of the time during which the secret/confidential information is maintained in such state applies to all apparatus that may exist on the system since the decryption key for decrypting the encrypted secret/confidential information is not made available until expiration of the predetermined period of time.

Further, there is no teaching or suggestion in Schoultz that decryption keys are generated in advance and such decryption keys are delivered to each of the apparatuses that may exist in the system only after a predetermined period of time has expired as in the present invention. There is no such delivery of decryption keys after a preset time as taught Schoultz.

Still further, there is no teaching or suggestion in Schoultz that codes are provided in the program that pack the encrypted information and time information regarding the time during which the secret/confidential information is maintained in the secret/confidential state into a file as in the present invention.

Thus, as is quite clear from the above, the features of the present invention are not taught or suggested by Schoultz whether taken individually or in combination with any of the other references of record. Therefore, reconsideration and

withdrawal of the 35 USC §102(a) rejection of claims 2-20 as being anticipated by Schoultz is respectfully requested.

The remaining references of record have been studied. Applicants submit that they do not supply any of the deficiencies noted above with respect to the reference utilized in the rejection of claims 2-20.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 2-20 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 2-20 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (501.36148CX2).

Respectfully submitted,

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